

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)
Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (NEA/PI)

Funding Opportunity Title: Tomorrow's Leaders II Scholarship Program and Recruitment

Announcement Type: Revised

Funding Opportunity Number: NEAPI-09-CA-018-MENA-102809

CFDA Number: 19.500

Application Package One Title: Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program II

Funding Competition ID: TLII

Application Package Two Title: Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship Program II: Recruitment

Funding Competition ID: TLR

Date Opened: October 29, 2009

Date Revised: December 12, 2009

Due Date for Applications: 23:59:59 EST February 10, 2010

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I. Funding Opportunity Description:

The Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (NEA/PI) announces an open competition for proposals to enhance and expand educational opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa. Education is a priority for the Administration, and President Obama has called for an increased emphasis on building partnerships through expanding exchanges and increasing scholarship opportunities for students from this region. With this announcement, NEA/PI seeks to expand its Tomorrow's Leader Scholarship program, an innovative educational opportunity that offers degree-granting, university-level scholarship and internship opportunities at select institutions of learning in the Middle East and North Africa. The current Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship program began in 2007 and is hosted by the American University in Cairo, Lebanese American University, and the American University of Beirut.

The applicant to this program announcement should be prepared to host the first cohort of scholarship recipients funded under this RFA beginning in the 2011/2012 academic year. Priority areas under this RFA follow below. Detailed guidance is attached. Interested applicants are encouraged to read this entire RFA as well as the full guidance before submitting an application.

Priority Areas

A) Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarships II:

Under Priority Area A, recipients will implement the second phase of a scholarship program for Arab students from underserved backgrounds. Successful applicants will provide an American-accredited undergraduate education for a cadre of civic-minded, intellectually able, and professionally skilled youth, ensuring they are well-prepared to become future community and business leaders.

The Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarships II (TLII) program will partner with host universities to provide four-to-five year academic matriculation and community service opportunities for secondary school graduates from the Middle East and North Africa who are from diverse and socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and whose academic merit and other credentials would qualify them for admission to a university program of study but whose limited financial resources preclude attendance. The TLII project emphasizes the identification of highly motivated male and female students with demonstrated English language ability and leadership potential. Proposals under this priority area support full four-to-five year scholarships for at least **12** students per class cohort. Applicants should expect to host at least two cohorts for a minimum combined total of 24 students. Strategies to leverage program resources through cost-sharing to provide cohorts greater than 12 are strongly encouraged. In addition to proposing cost-sharing (see budget criteria), applicants should indicate how they will continue the project with non-USG funding upon completion of this project.

NEA/PI's experience with this program teaches that not every student who is admitted to "Tomorrow's Leaders" will be able to register and complete his or her intended program of study. Applicants must discuss how they would achieve the intended results of the project (i.e. maintaining a minimum of 24 students) if one or more students withdraw prior to completion of the program.

Applicants to Priority Area A may also propose recruitment activities by their own educational institution in their proposal and budget. Applicants that propose to host and recruit should be prepared to do the recruitment for ALL of the host institutes and should therefore demonstrate an ability to work with and coordinate among multiple organizations (i.e., the other host universities), including those located in different countries. Applications that propose to recruit for a single host institution will not be accepted. (Please note that NEA/PI is also soliciting in this announcement separate applications under Priority Area B to specifically address the recruitment needs associated with TLII. Only one organization will be selected to conduct all recruitment activities for TLII.)

Partnerships between or among public sector, private sector and nongovernmental entities that meld capabilities to address the announcement's objectives will ensure maximum reach of existing resources, including human knowledge, infrastructure, and technology. For the purposes of this RFA, "partnership" is defined as a negotiated arrangement among organizations that provides for a substantive, collaborative role for each of the partners in the planning and implementation of a project. Applicants intending to represent a coalition of providers should be prepared to provide, if requested, a signed partnership agreement stating:

- An intent to commit or receive resources or services from the prospective partner(s) contingent upon receipt of funds;
- How the partnership arrangement advances the objectives of the project;
- Supporting documentation identifying the resources, experience, and expertise of the partner(s);
- Evidence that each of the partner(s) has been involved in the planning of the project;
- Clarification of the role of the partner(s) in the implementation of the project, evaluation, and sustainability.

B) Recruitment for Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarships II:

Under Priority Area B, NEA/PI is soliciting applications from organizations to conduct the recruitment portion of TLII. "Tomorrow's Leaders" students are recruited and screened by a single recruitment implementing partner, with the final selection of scholarship recipients resting with each of the host

universities. Applicants under this priority area should be prepared to recruit students for all awards made under Priority Area A in order to ensure participant consistency and a centralized recruiting system. Proposals under this priority area should include a plan to advertise, recruit and screen qualified scholarship recipients consistent with the profile articulated in Priority Area A. Applicants that propose to host and recruit should be prepared to do the recruitment for ALL of the host institutes and should therefore demonstrate an ability to work with and coordinate among multiple organizations (i.e., the host universities), including those located in different countries. Applications that propose to recruit for a single host institution will not be accepted.

At least 100 candidates per year for two annual cycles will need to be recruited and screened under this award. NEA/PI will identify target countries for each recruitment cycle. Submissions should describe how the applicant will assess the suitability of potential scholarship recipients for the rigors of TLII, including the potential recipients' future leadership plans, as well as the recipients' commitment to the program.

Background Information about MEPI: The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), located within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, supports efforts to expand political participation, strengthen civil society and the rule of law, empower women and youth, create educational opportunities, and foster economic reform throughout the Middle East and North Africa. In support of these goals, MEPI works with non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, and government officials. More information about MEPI can be found at: www.mepi.state.gov. Information on MEPI's regional offices in Abu Dhabi and Tunis can be found at: www.abudhabi.mepi.state.gov and www.medregion.mepi.state.gov.

Electronic Link to Full Announcement: Go to <http://www.mepi.state.gov>, click on Funding & Project Opportunities, click on "Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship II" link.

II. Award Information

Funding Instrument Type: Cooperative Agreements

Anticipated Total Program Funding: \$7,250,000 in Economic Support Funds

Anticipated number of Awards: Three awards: two for the Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship II Program (Priority Area A), and one for the Recruitment of Tomorrow's Leaders Scholarship II (Priority Area B).

Ceiling of Individual Award Amounts: Tomorrow's Leaders: \$3,400,000

Floor of Individual Award Amounts: TLII Recruitment \$300,000

NEA/PI reserves the right to award less or more than the funds described in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as NEA/PI may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

Project and Budget Periods:

Applicants to **Priority Area A** that do not also propose to conduct recruitment and screening may propose performance periods of six years. Applicants to Priority Area A that also propose to do recruitment and screening may propose a performance period of seven years (up to 12 months for the

initial recruitment and, up to five years of education for each cohort). NEA/PI will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the applicants, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

Applicants to **Priority Area B** may propose performance periods of up to two years. NEA/PI will entertain applications for continuation grants funded under these awards, beyond the initial budget period, on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the applicants, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

NEA/PI encourages all applicants to provide maximum levels of cost-sharing from additional sources in support of this project. Applications should explain clearly how the additional resources will be used. If these resources are not proposed, applicants should explain why not.

III. Eligibility Information

Eligible applicants for Priority Area A are institutions of higher learning that have an undergraduate program. Applicants are based in one of the eligible countries listed in this RFA and are registered and accredited in the United States. Applicants must be able to provide a minimum of three of the four to five years of the proposed program in the Middle East or North Africa. Eligible institutions must have demonstrated capacity and experience to: 1) design and offer all of the essential components of the "Tomorrow's Leaders" program, 2) the institutional capacity to place and monitor scholarship recipients in internships and study abroad programs, and 3) to administer an Exchange Visitor (J visa) Program within full government regulations as set forth in 22 CFR 6Z.

Eligible applicants for Priority Area B include any registered U.S. or foreign non-profit organization.

Additional Information on Eligibility: All Federal assistance recipients must have a Dun & Bradstreet Number prior to funds disbursement. A DUNS number may be acquired at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or requesting on-line at www.dnb.com.

IV. Application Submission and Deadline

Application materials should be submitted online via www.grants.gov.

Applicants must clearly identify in Section 15 on the SF-424 and on the MEPI Cover sheet whether they are applying to Priority Area A or Priority Area B. Applicants who wish to apply for both priority areas must submit an application under each priority area.

To meet the announcement deadline, submissions must be made before 23:59:59 eastern standard time (EST) on February 10, 2010. Applicants are warned that Grants.gov requires a registration period of 10 days. Further, applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals far enough in advance of the deadline so that they can alert NEA/PI (nea-grants@state.gov) of any technical difficulties they might encounter in submission and obtain and avail themselves of alternative submission procedures prior to the deadline.

Applicants who anticipate having difficulty submitting their application(s) via Grants.gov must notify NEA/PI before January 27, 2009. There will be no grace period and no application will be considered

unless it is received electronically by the announced deadline.

All applicants must be prepared to include the following in their submission via Grants.gov:

____ (a) Federal Assistance Application (Standard Forms 424) available for online completion with the application package at: www.grants.gov;

____ (b) NEA/PI Cover Sheet and an Executive Summary of no more than two pages – Template for this sheet can be found attached to this announcement, or by going to www.mepi.state.gov and clicking on Funding & Project Opportunities.

____ (c) Proposal Narrative - The application narrative should not exceed 25 pages with no more than 20 pages of appendices attached. Each page should be numbered sequentially. Narrative submission should be in Times New Roman font, size 12, single-line spacing.

____ (d) Budget and Budget Justification (Narrative) – The budget and justification should not exceed 10 pages, and each page should be number sequentially. NEA/PI prefers that budgets and justifications be submitted in MS-Excel or MS-Word. Guidance for responding to this can be found in Section V “Review and Selection Process.”

Please note: The limitation of 55 pages for each submission should be considered as a maximum and not necessarily a goal, and excludes the SF 424 forms, MEPI cover sheet, and Executive Summary.

Applicants need not include their most recent annual report and Negotiated Indirect Costs Rate Agreement (NICRA), but should be prepared to provide a copy of these documents upon request.

V. Review and Selection Process

Each application submitted under this announcement will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the following evaluation criteria. The criteria are designed to assess the quality of the proposed project, and to determine the likelihood of its success. The criteria are closely related and are considered as a whole in judging the overall quality of an application. Applications will be reviewed on the basis of their fullness, coherence, clarity, and attention to detail. Points are awarded only to applications that are deemed responsive within the context of this program announcement.

Applicants must submit a full project description in accordance with the following instructions and the specified evaluation criteria. The instructions give a broad overview of what the project description should include while the evaluation criteria provide details of more program-specific information that is needed.

NEA/PI Cover Sheet: Please complete the NEA/PI cover sheet and provide an Executive Summary of the project description (no more than two pages) with reference to the amount and duration of the funding request.

Narrative: Outline a plan of action which describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors which might accelerate or decelerate the work and state reasons for taking the proposed approach rather than others. Describe any unusual features of the project such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates. List those organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Provide information on the applicant organization(s) and cooperating partners such as organizational charts, financial statements, documentation of professional accreditation or of experience in the priority area, and other pertinent information.

Include written agreements between grantees and sub-grantees or subcontractors or other cooperating entities. These agreements must detail scope of work to be performed, work schedules, remuneration, and other terms and conditions that structure or define the relationship.

Application Evaluation Criteria:

Innovation and Approach – All applicants should clearly describe how their proposals will address the program as outlined in the attached guidance. Applicants under Priority Area A must also articulate a feasible approach to maintain the relationships with the participants during the entire award period. Applicants to Priority Area B must demonstrate an innovative approach to recruitment and screening from countries within the Middle East and North Africa with specific information as to how they will reach the intended audience.

An applicant is encouraged to provide information on the total range of projects it currently conducts related to the priority area. The approach will be evaluated in terms of expediency and feasibility in the regional and country context. (30 points)

Results or Benefits – Applicant clearly demonstrates how the project is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results including a results monitoring plan that identifies key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward program goals. Any relevant data based on planning studies should be included or referenced in the endnotes/footnotes. The demographic data and participant/beneficiary information illustrate reasonably the impact to be achieved. (25 points)

Organizational Capacity – The organization has expertise in the relevant priority area and demonstrates the ability to engage and work together with local and regional networks. Where partners are described, the applicant details the rationale for the consortia, each partner's respective role, and how the coalition will enhance the progress towards achieving goals in the stated priority area. The organization demonstrates a high level of regional and/or country expertise. (20 points)

Staff and Position Specifications – Each key person whether staff, consultant, or volunteer is described in a biographical sketch; a job description is provided for each open key position, including those to be advertised post-award. Individual organization staffs, including volunteers, are well qualified and described. (10 points)

Budget and Budget Justification (Additional guidance for responding to this criterion may be found attached to this announcement, or by going to www.mepi.state.gov and clicking on Funding & Project Opportunities.) The detailed budget includes a breakout of any funding sources identified in Block 15 of

the SF-424. Calculations are provided with line item detail for each budget object class identified on the Budget Information form (SF 424). The budget narrative provides details of calculations including estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. Per-student costs and cost-sharing are reasonable and feasible.

The budget and narrative justification are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results and the plan for services is realistic. The budget documents the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of all proposed costs. Adequate travel to and within the Middle East is proposed. The application documents any efforts to secure other funding sources. (15 points)

VI. Award Administration

A. Award Notices: The successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a Financial Assistance Award document, which sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-Federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The Financial Assistance Award will be signed by the Department of State warranted Grants Officer and the award package will be transmitted electronically. Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by electronic letter.

B. Administration and National Policy Requirements. Those applicants selected under this RFA will receive a cooperative agreement containing terms and conditions prescribed by the Department of State under U.S. law and regulation:
22 CFR –Parts 137 & 145
Public Law 111-8

Reporting Requirements: Programmatic and Financial Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of each quarter. A final report covering finance and results achieved will be due no later than 90 days after the end of the performance period.

The Office of Management and Budget has consolidated and replaced four existing financial reporting forms (SF–269, SF–269A, SF– 272, and SF–272A) with a single Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425). Award recipients should anticipate using FFR SF-425 for submitting financial reports. The FFR SF-425 has 2 major components (1) Cash Management Report (former SF-272) and (2) Financial Status Reports (former SF-269).

Also, awardees will be required to submit reports and provide evaluation findings to NEA/PI through the NEA/PI Online Performance Reporting System (DS-4127 – OMB clearance expires July 31, 2011). All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years, and provided to NEA/PI upon request.

NEA/PI provides interactive database access to all project implementers to facilitate work plan approvals and a Results Monitoring Plan (RMP) to track the project's progress towards defined objectives, as the activities unfold and at the end of the project. Recipients should plan to track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on

institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

The RMP will include the Intended Outcome(s) and the approved Activities and Objectives with Performance Indicators for each. The Intended Outcome is the principal change to be achieved by completing the activities and realizing the objectives of a project. It reflects the anticipated impact of the project and defines how a situation will be different after the project is successfully completed. The Objectives are concrete accomplishments that can be explicitly and logically linked to achievement of an Intended Outcome. Objectives should be "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and achievable within the time frame of the project).

Performance Indicators will measure achievement of the Intended Outcomes and Objectives rather than quantify the outputs of activities. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards the results achieved. For example, number of service providers trained would NOT be a direct measure of the result "service delivery improved." Findings on both outputs and results may be reported, but the focus should be on results.

Substantial Involvement: Representatives from the U.S. Department of State will review all agendas and materials for all program components and participate in selected parts of the program as deemed appropriate.

All awardees are expected to provide the Project Officer and Grants Office a complete list of participants in MEPI-funded project activities and to assist MEPI with the distribution and collection of materials related to MEPI alumni activities.

The host institution(s) will provide program participants' names and contact information to MEPI upon the participant's selection. This will enable MEPI to invite "Tomorrow's Leaders" program participants to participate in the Middle East Partnership Initiative Alumni Network.

Acknowledgement: Recipient organizations must ensure that the Department of State, through the Middle East Partnership Initiative, is acknowledged as the program sponsor in all program-related communications. All communications, paper or electronic, must include the full program name and the MEPI logo. NEA/PI must approve all publicity and advertising materials before they are published.

All products and services developed or produced as a result of an approved award must clearly acknowledge the Middle East Partnership Initiative support. The U.S. Government will retain the right to royalty-free use of all materials developed through U.S.-funded programs. The recipient should plan for Internet connectivity with the MEPI web site, where relevant.